The Tragicomedy of being a Robin

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The Tragicomedy of being a Robin

by nightlyrobins

Summary

> “What'cha doing?” probably-Jason-Todd asks him.
>
> “What does it look like I'm doing?” Tim tries, feeling exceptionally awkward. He can tell he looks the part, because Jason just stares at him like he grew a second head overnight.
>
> It definitely does look like he's trying and failing to unlock his own phone, his fingers moving frantically in every single combination he could come up with that would mean anything. For the phone he... you know, owns. The one he set the password for. Tim is sure he can't emphasize it enough.
>
> Why isn't his password the same across universes? Couldn't the universe or God make it easy for him, just once?
>
> “Please get out.”

Isekai'd into a life that seems both better and worse than his current one, soon-to-be highschool graduate Timothy has to pick between suffering through or absolutely enjoying the impossible experience of being thrown into the shoes of a vigilante and millionaire CEO who just happens to share his name.

Can he even fix whatever is going on with this life he's been dropped into? Timothy Drake can surely try.

Chapter 1: #1. A story often starts by the end of a life

Chapter Notes

CW: character death (both past and major), depressive thoughts, neglect, non-explicit car accidents & a bit of a slightly more descriptive version of one, minor injury & blood

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You really shouldn't sleep in class,” Tam, longtime friend, deskmate and common victim of questioning on why she still sits with him when she could sit with anyone else, tells him as they pick up their trays with mostly-edible cafeteria food.

The best public schools can give. Hell yes.

Tim counted five minutes and twenty seconds before she brought it up, in the exact same way she did as when she first spoke to him, all freshly assigned class-president manners, thinking she had to take care of every single problem of their group.

Tim stifles a yawn as they sit in their usual table, feeling like he last slept two centuries ago despite having spent the last two periods in deep slumber. “I definitely can, you just watched me do it.”

Tam raises an eyebrow, sharp, and not that amused. Tim smiles, just mildly uncomfortable with being under her scrutiny, feeling like a scolded child.

“Come on, Tam. You know I never get in trouble for that.”

“Well, no, because you deliver average to excellent grades all the time, which is still baffling to me,” she rested her cheek in her palm, judging him in that way only people destined for International Business can. “I can't think of a single occasion where you have paid attention for longer than a minute. Maybe two.”

Objectively speaking, he shouldn't sleep in class, but he simply had better things to do at home than sleep! Like read, disarm his toaster for the umpteenth time only to put it back together until it's arguably working better, think about his future career in Computer Science and learn coding and “*hacking*” from shady Reddit users.

Tam was right to be surprised, everyone was. Even Tim didn't understand how he managed to always get nice grades. B minus was his worst, and that was when he didn't particularly like the subject.

“I am a genius,” he took a bite of his sandwich. “My elementary school teacher said so.”

“Right.”

Tim had a feeling she didn't buy it, but it was true! His first grade teacher, a nice woman called Enid, told his parents that little Timmy had great potential and should be invested in as soon as he started elementary—meaning a private school, extracurriculars, anything to exploit that little spark she said he had.

He learned to read and talk properly relatively fast, he liked to read the children's books Miss Enid kept in the classroom instead of going to recess and, in her words, had a great imagination. Sometimes, he felt as though she only felt the need to say that because she just didn't know how to deal with him, because Tim didn't like playing with other kids.

Maybe she thought he was some sort of Sheldon Cooper. And while he had never seen the full series, he knew enough to understand that *maybe* she had some reasons to think that.

“I just think he'd do better in a school with better learning opportunities, Miss Drake,” she had said. And Tim tried to find it in himself to feel nice about it to mirror his parent's reactions, but he felt little about it, because he didn't understand.

He was probably not a genius, because he felt very dumb sometimes.

His mother had been so proud, smiling bright as she thanked the teacher profusely for her comments, and his father had taken them out for ice cream to celebrate that same afternoon. It was so great, his mother hadn't even scolded him that much when he got a bit of his vanilla scoop on her skirt.

It would've been possible, maybe, if his parents hadn't died that same year, only three months later, taken by a terrible car crash that didn't give either the time to arrive to the hospital. A drunk driver that fled the scene immediately, they said, but they never found who or how, just that the car they were in was torn to shreds and his parents hadn't had any chances to survive. None at all.

He still remembers the absolute hell that the weeks following the accident had been, what with the extensive search of just *who* could take care of 5-year-old Timothy Drake, the little boy that had yet to speak a single word to anyone.

He hadn't cried. Not after being taken out of class by an officer and a social worker in the middle of the day and told the unfortunate news, or at the funeral his mom's kind boss had paid for completely to honor the ten wonderful years she had worked under his company, and now at seventeen he wondered if he'd ever do it. Cry.

Many people had given him their condolences, but he had stood perfectly still, looking somewhere in the horizon, and responded to no one. It was better like that, he could tell his social worker was relieved to not have to deal with a child's hysteric crying and questioning about parents who were never coming back.

It took him a while to understand anything that happened, so maybe he wasn't genius at all.

(Sometimes he thinks of his parent's graves, side by side, together until the end, and feels his eyes burn a little, but those tears never do really come out. They never, ever do.

An excellent mother, wife and daughter for an extraordinary father, husband, son and brother. Tim wishes he knew them more.)

Timothy ended up being problem of an older cousin of his, who most likely had accepted out of pity, because he can't imagine any other reason a twenty-five-year-old with a very nice job and no relationships a good five states away from New Jersey would accept to take a boy in.

Megan Drake was a little bit of a free soul, or so his father had said, in the scarce times he mentioned her niece. Tim could see it in the bottles of whiskey and cheap vodka she kept in her room, the colorful clothes she wore, her procrastination problem and how she went out to drink and party when she had the chance, even now at thirty-six.

Still, it was nice of her to take him in, so he made a conscious effort to never be a bother and never think anything bad of her. She was barely twenty-five back then, and she definitely hadn't signed up for one day being called and asked to care for a child she hadn't met until then.

She didn't make him talk, and barely even batted an eye when he did so for the first time, almost three months in her care. Asking to get vanilla icecream from the supermarket, of all things.

“Sure, let's get that,” she nodded and dropped two tubs of vanilla icecream into the cart before they moved to the next section.

She wasn't mom material, and perhaps at first she wasn't even auntie material, she was just Megan, who perhaps he could call a friend as he grew and viewed their vague relationship as very roommate-like. It helped that she never really tried to be anything other than the one who paid for him and fed him and got him clothes.

He really could do whatever, as long as he didn't... You know, burn the house down or get arrested, things like that. Tim was half sure that would probably be funny for Megan anyway, but he didn't want to find out the hard way.

Their conversations were short and pleasant, and it reminded Tim of the few conversations he had with his teachers, at least after the period where everyone insisted on asking how he was doing with his parents' tragic death passed.

The answer was always *I'm doing good*, but everyone should know just how shitty it is to be doing bad and, on top of that, being nagged by stupid questions.

“Aren't you going to answer that?” Tam asked, pointing at his phone, currently receiving a call from Megan.

Huh, how long had he been reminiscing? What a way to get lost in his thoughts he had.

He sent an apologetic smile in Tam's direction, who merely shook her head and returned to her lunch and own phone.

“Hey, Timmy!” Megan greeted when he picked up, as always. Her voice sounded cheery and loud even without speaker.

“Hi Meg,” he smiled a bit, hoping it was audible in his voice. “Something up?”

“Not really, just letting you know I don't think I can make it home tonight or... for a few days, really,” *a classic*, Tim thought, not maliciously. She at least sounded apologetic. “I left money for takeout for the week, it should be enough but if you run out I'll send some more. Just text me, 'kay?”

When Megan deemed him old enough to leave alone for extended periods of time (although twelve years old was definitely an overestimation for most preteens' ability to *not* cause chaos when left alone), she began going out of state and even out of the country for longer and longer periods, following her brand new job in an internationally recognized company.

Tim didn't blame her, because the pay was extremely good, enough to support them both comfortably and still leave a bit for her own hobby spendings and an allowance for him, with the only downside being that she was constantly on the move with her new boss.

Thinking about it, Tim isn't sure if he even knew just what the job was. When asked, he just said his cousin was working with some Lewis guy and people seemed to understand immediately what that meant.

He only remembers being happy for her, and also for himself, because it meant he had the house for himself.

Not that he did anything cool, like throw a party, do drugs or get wasted. He simply stopped asking anyone permission to bring friends over, or stay up watching TV or just do whatever in complete solitude, like accidentally flooding the living room.

He even kept the place clean! How many sixteen-year-olds did that without being asked to?

“No problem. Be careful.”

“Bye-bye, duckie!”

She liked him, he thought. Or at least he hoped she did, if being called *duckie* was a sign of being liked then maybe yes.

Really, eleven years living together without any arguments should be *'I like this kid*' material, in his opinion. He liked Megan, as much as one can like a distant relative at least.

“Do you want to come over?” he asked Tam as he scrolled through his notifications after the call ended.

She hummed. “Sorry, my dad wants us to visit my aunt today. Maybe Friday? There's this movie I want us to see.”

“Fine by me,” he replied, and briefly considered inviting Sebastian or Ariana, but ultimately decided against it.

It was a little funny how his roster of friends was so limited, but then again he didn't make much effort into talking to people. He made sure to just be a cool guy, only liked enough to not be remarkable in the slightest—one of those people you smile and greet from afar if you see them in the halls or outside school. Perfectly neutral ground if you wanted to complain about something or someone in fleeting conversations.

“Is pizza fine for Friday?”

Tam smiled at him, teasing. “Yes. No mushrooms though, *duckie*.”

“Got that.”

His cheeks burned a bit with mild embarrassment over the nickname, and he kicked her foot away under the table lightly, which earned him a light smack on the arm, but they both giggled a bit, so he felt very alright.

Tim spent the rest of the day sleeping, or at least very close to it, dozing on and off History and Physics class and a third mysterious class he's unsure what even was. Seriously, who designed this schedule? He'd rather hear Mrs. Denis talk about her failed marriage and how that led her to teach dumb teenagers, for two hours straight.

By the end of the day he had only gotten scolded once! He'd have to text Sebastian about it, definitely. New record? For sure.

He made his way through the halls until he found his locker, and shoved his books into his backpack before getting out with little to think about. Only once he was at the main entrance did he realize that it was raining, and heavily so.

“Right...” he huffed, taking a second to watch how almost every student around him had an umbrella or a car waiting for them at the line. People waiting for them in the line.

Had a heavy rain been forecasted? *I'm pretty sure I'm smart enough to check the weather every morning*, he thought, irritated, as he looked at his backpack, hoping an umbrella would pop out of thin air.

Finding himself umbrella-less told him he was, in fact, not as smart as he thought. *Stupid past Tim. Stupid rain. Stupid weather. Stupid thirty-minute walk.*

Was it worth it resembling a soaked stray cat when he got home? Maybe so, because there's no one to see him in that poor state anyway.

He spotted Tam as she got into the passenger seat of her father's car, smiling and chatting away about her day, andhe suddenly missed his own dad.

Tim missed his dad, and his mom, and overall having people picking him up from school, or care if he made it home soaked from head to toe, or remind him to bring an umbrella with him just in case.

Megan chooses that very moment to text him.

Meg

Hi duckie 3:04 p.m

U can ask the neighbor to open the door fpr u I called him before and he said it's ok so don't worry K?3:04 p.m

for* sorry 3:06 p.m

I forgot to leave the keys for u so sorry!!! I was rushing 3:06 p.m

Take care x 3:08 p.m

Tim would most likely not do that, but it was a nice thought. He didn't want to take a poor old man out of his house and into the rain to help him open the door, why would he bother someone like that? He'd just... break one of the windows or something like that.

It's not like he hasn't had to fix a window before all by himself, with Megan being none the wiser. Because really, as long as he was alive and the house was still standing, she barely bothered to ask. Megan was often in her own world of work, romance and her artistic side career to bother showing much worry now that he was almost an adult.

Keyword: almost.

(*"Rough day?" she had asked, pointing at the bandages around Tim's palm, covering a few nasty cuts from barely a week ago.*

He'd accidentally broken one of the windows while trying to get around with a baseball bat and a tennis ball, a terrible idea in hindsight.

Tim decided to use all of his allowance and a bit of savings to pay someone to repair it instead of telling Megan he had messed up, but he had made the mistake of trying to pick up the pieces with bare hands.

A rookie move, really. He'd realized that when his hands bled under the water stream as he washed them, the cold water against the cuts getting a hiss out of him.

He'd had to look for a YouTube video on how to take care of those to make sure they didn't get infected, and had done a decent job after that and a WikiHow article.

Ignoring the second method "Get Medical Care" was in his best interest. Either way, now he knew how to care for minor wounds—that had to come in handy someday.

Tim put on his best smile and nodded. "Yeah, kind of."

Megan smiled and ruffled his head before stepping out of the house, but didn't ask again, and he didn't say anything. The cuts healed by themselves quite nicely.)

Tim guesses it would be nice if someone cared, like his parents had cared for him once. But there was no one like that. Even if he was sure his friends cared, he doubted it was like *that*.

Like family.

What he would give for a real family. A big one, with a stupidly large dinner table where they all sat and asked about each other's days and *talked* about anything. A million years ago, it was like that—mom and dad made it feel like a big family, maybe because he was only five and the world was big in itself, but really...

What had he done wrong?

He decided having depressing, harming thoughts about himself and yearning for the impossible on a rainy day was not worth the effort, so he turned his phone off without replying, pulled his hood up, shoved his hands in his pockets and began walking. The rain hit him in no time, heavy and unforgiving and cold, and he had half the mind to curse out all and any deity willing to reply for making this his life.

Gosh, can't he just have another one? Where can he get a refund? He'd like to speak to the manager.

“I wonder if that's just God himself,” he murmurs as he gets to the wide crosswalk he sees every day, waiting for the light to turn red, and even that seemed to have it out for him.

It has quickly delved into a storm as he made his way through his usual route, with thunder and lightning included. What was that about not walking during a storm? Maybe he will be struck like lightning, because he's unlucky like that.

He stands next to a poor lady in executive attire, covering herself with her black blazer, and what was most likely a college guy with earbuds on, both also caught by the rain. Tim felt a little better about himself, even if it was at the expense of those two and all the other people that were having a terrible time walking back home.

It's cold. Colder than it should be. Isn't it supposed to be June? Why is there a storm all of a sudden?

Maybe he should microwave the leftover pasta Megan had brought home the other day from when she went out with her coworkers, because he doesn't think any delivery guys are very keen on delivering in this weather. Tim is not about to make someone's life harder if he can help it, and he's also not about to risk making an inedible concoction by himself. He just wants a warm meal and put something on the TV, for heaven's sake.

He's thinking about that, distracted and simultaneously mad at the light that has yet to turn red to let them pass, when he feels a pair of hands pushing him forward, knocking him off balance and sending him directly into the wet asphalt, where a puddle has barely formed.

Tim sees his reflection in it, as thunder breaks in the cloud above him, but... No, it's wrong.

That's not him.

Maybe he is hallucinating, but he is pretty sure he doesn't look *that* tired on the regular, or at least he hadn't looked like that when he checked himself in the bathroom's mirror just shy of three hourse ago. He's not wearing red or black today either, and he's so sure he's not wearing any masks, so *what*...?

He is about to say or do something, he's sure. Maybe call out to whoever pushed him, or move back into the sidewalk before something happens. But he can't, he's frozen in place for a split second too long to react, stunned by what he sees reflected in the puddle, because that's *not him*.

The only thing to hear then is the young lady yelling “Oh my gosh!”, and see the guy try to reach out for him from the corner of his eye, but soon enough all he can focus on are the rapidly approaching lights of a truck at maximum speed, unwilling to stop, all in a second's work.

He's not even sure what his last thought is before everything goes dark.

Maybe about how poetic it all is, circling back to vehicles (had it been a truck with his parents, too?). Maybe about *his parents*, mom and dad. Maybe about Megan, and how she'd have to deal with the aftermath and perhaps be a little sad, in the way you're sad when a pet you liked is killed by a truck. Maybe about Tam, Sebastian, Ariana, Miss Enid, Mrs. Denis and her failed marriage.

No, when he opens his eyes again what feels like only a second later, he's pretty sure his last thought was focused on the small sticker right under one of the headlights that blinded him as he looked up and met them like the eyes of a beast.

A bat.

Chapter End Notes

soooooo hi, my name is Sumi and i have decided it is time to write something for the fandom i've been in for almost 3 years! ^_^ i rlly like isekai stories & i think we should throw Tim into the meat grinder once or twice a week so this is me doing it...

i've read most Batman & Co. comics (especially Tim ones) & decided canon is optional when i have this much knowledge. this is mostly me being funny, so i hope u guys have fun! just to clarify i won't include much fanon content but some things that happened in canon might have my personal interpretation or how i wished they were handled like Tim's million exsituationships

this is also to prove myself i can form credible dialogues that would happen between human beings from real life (as opposed to human beings from my imagination), so i hope it gets better as chapters progress & that it's not unreadable. if you have any feedback or something to say please leave a comment & be nice :') ❤

also i am not american & i'm barely out of highschool myself so if i get something wrong about the school system or details like that please lmk or... ignore it, maybe hehe

some tags will be added overtime, but i will keep most of the trigger warning in the beginning notes. if u think i should add some, please comment! i rlly like some ships & i could add them in the future, but i rlly like having very minor romance so i might keep it all platonic!!! some ships are implied, blink & u miss it kinda stuff, but lmk if u think they should be tagged

also i am autistic & this is based on a few of my thoughts & experiences before & after my diagnosis but idk if that warrants the tag of autistic Tim even if i think he IS. it's entirely up to your interpretation :3

also x2 i love Duke but he won't be in most of this story okay but i love him #DukeThomas4ever

SORRY IM SO NERVOUS IVE NEVER POSTED BEFORE

also x3 yes this is truck-kun LISTEN

Chapter 2: #2. Find your other self in the mirror

Chapter Notes

TW: brief mentions of throwing up, mild injury

there is a brief Jason pov because i think he should be studied

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Fuck, was the only thing his brain said. Unhelpful.

Tim is startled awake by a violent need to vomit, so he gets up and leans forward despite the acute protest of his torso, covering his mouth with his hands as his lungs struggled to accomodate the air that came through his nose as if it was liquid. He coughs a few times before gradually getting a hold of himself, the blur at the edges of his vision slowly giving way to a clearer image.

He had nothing to throw up, he notices, his stomach completely empty, even though he definitely had eaten something earlier at school.

His breathing came in heavy gasps for a solid minute. He felt like he didn't know how to breathe and it was agonizing. Was this how fish felt when pulled out of the water? He hoped not, it was terrible.

“What...?” he whispered, as he looked around in a room that was familiar in a way, but completely different in many others.

It should not be this big and spacious, and there should not be something to look at outside the window. Tim had covered his ages ago, with multiple pieced of black cardboard, for undisclosed reasons.

That was definitely not his biggest concern, although waking up in unknown places definitely should be. For instance, he'd like to know what in the mother of all pains had happened to his body for it to hurt this way at every minuscule shift and brush of the shirt against his skin. He could barely breathe without hissing, a pain so absolute he felt it blinding.

When Tim lifted his shirt and looked, there was an assortment of bruises—blotches of purple, blue and even green from older but not quite healed yet ones, scattered across his torso like paint. He almost thinks it is, until he pokes one of them and finds out the hard way just how much it stings.

The only thing he can do is throw himself back into the pillow and sigh. The ceiling is unfamiliar, all fancy and tall, reminding him vaguely of Megan's room, which was the largest in the house, but not by much and not like this.

They weren't exactly rich, they lived well, but all of this structure just screams some sort of... rich people thing. Ew? Maybe.

Three important questions float around in his head as his eyes rake across the room one more time: where is he, how is he and why is he?

Wasn't he about to get hit by a truck? Was that a hallucination, just like his vision on the puddle? Was this an elaborate prank and someone was about to come out of from behind the dresser and say '*Got'cha*!'?

“That's not how real life works,” it's not the first and certainly not the last time he'll talk himself out of stupid thoughts, stop it.

Frowning, irritated, in pain, confussed and with no idea where the hell he was... What does Timothy do when he can't understand?

He investigates, of course.

Getting up from the bed is a chore in itself. Standing on wobbly legs, feeling like he has been starved for days, resenting a twelve-hour workout or both at the same time, is unpleasant. Horrid experience. Maybe he should've listened to Tam about exercising more often.

When he stands up and finally manages to stabilize himself, he can get a clearer look on everything and determine it is, in fact, not his room. No matter how similar it looks and how correctly placed some items are, this is not his room.

“Okay, this is not your room,” Tim nodded. “This is not your room, start panicking.”

He didn't panic, putting it on his To-do list for now. Instead, he reached for the phone that lay discarded on the floor—it was an incredibly expensive model with an equally expensive-looking red case that was most likely custom-made, he remembers seeing it on Instagram, advertised as the latest and better version. How Tim would've managed to get his hands on one of these, he'd like to know.

Maybe if he went through it, he'd find answers.

But then again, what if he didn't? What if this was all a nightmare?

Was he in a coma, living a whole life before waking up where he left it back home? A horror story, or so he had heard.

Tim clicked to turn on the phone, but nothing happened. He tried again, applying a bit more pressure and for a little longer, and an empty battery mocked him on the screen.

“'Kay...” He turned the phone over and placed him on the bedside table, taking a deep breath.

And bad move, because it returned the pain of the bruises in his torso he was starting to believe were caused by broken ribs. It would make sense if he had cracked two or three ribs from the accident, but why was the rest of his body not injured? When you're hit by a car you tend to get some nasty injuries, he reckoned.

That's when he spotted the glass of water and two painkillers left on the same bedside table, accompanied by a note, messily ripped out from a notebook.

A said to leave you this. Don't wake up until sunset, I swear. -J

Thank you, mysterious person going by J, whose handwriting is actually very nice and readable, purposefully shortening people's names to a single letter to make everything impossible for Tim to decipher. *A* could be anyone, as expected of possibly the most common letter in the damn world.

He doesn't think twice before taking the painkillers and downing them with the help of the water. Small mercies, at last.

Looking around once more, as if anything would have changed from the last time he saw it, he spots a few peculiarities that make him scrunch his nose up.

Who's ugly posters are those on the wall? *Superboy*? Like, the one from DC?

It was true he had been briefly interested in DC Comics, mostly because his good, great, incredible and never nerdy friend Sebastian told him there was a character named just like him: Timothy Drake.

(*"Hey, it's technically not the same," he told his friend as he drank from his smoothie. They'd been standing next to a donut stand for around ten minutes by then, trying to figure out which ones to buy.*

"Well yeah, he has a second name. So he's Timothy Jackson Drake, and you're just Timothy Drake," Sebastian smiled at him. "Talk about the coolness gap. How did your parents miss out on that middle name?"

The mention of his parents sours his mood a little, but he shrugs, electing to focus on the large list of donuts that opens before them. The girl attending the stand looks ready to ask them to leave, so he tries to get it over with quick.

He frowned as they debated over strawberry or Oreo frosting, returning to their conversation. "Jackson sounds like a rich kid name. Maybe it was for the better."

"Yeah, maybe. But you do look like him."

"You know how common it is to have black hair and blue eyes?" Tim rolled his eyes. "Everyone and their mother has them. Even in DC!")

Predictably, he got bored two days and three comics in. Too many comics to read, too many things to keep up with. He just kept forgetting to read Sebastian's recommendations and reading lists, slowly getting pushed back in his priority list until the phase passed for his friend and they didn't mention it again.

Sometimes he'd run into a big fan of the franchise though, and when it was time to introduce himself they always snapped their fingers and said "*Hey, like the character*."

Yes, like the character. He's sure it's not that statistically improbable. There must be someone out there named Jason Todd or Diana Prince or Bruce Wayne or... the other one. What was it? Yeah, Clark Kent.

Superboy's real? civilian? name was totally lost in the sea of characters he had tried and failed to identify and understand. It had to be something stupidly easy. He hopes the posters are there in an ironic way, because waking up to that guy's smirk every morning must be a little bit unnerving—although he likes the other ones, with a guy called Impulse and a blonde girl that's apparently Wonder Girl.

Wait, that's not the point! Why would he have posters for characters he doesn't know well, from a media he didn't even pick up completely in his (not-quite-his) room?

“Did I transmigrate?” he wonders out loud. It sounds as silly as he thought.

And now that he thinks about it, his voice sounds exactly the same. He tests it by saying a few words out loud, and finds the only slight difference is that it seems a little bit roughed out, as if he was sick or had strained his vocal cords recently. Hm.

What kind of novel would have a character with a voice so similar to his? Unless he was thrown into the role of an already existing one, but that didn't explain the eerily similar room he stood in. It was like looking at a version of his own where he had way too much money to spend. Megan would probably be delighted to see the mess in this room, so much like hers, and he shivers at the thought.

Was it ethical to clean an alternative universe's room without the original's consent? He just felt iffy.

Tim had read an embarrassing amount of stories about isekai and transmigration and dimension travel in middle school, but this felt extreme. It was a little rare that the protagonist didn't know the source they were transmigrated into, it was more common that they had interacted with the source at least once in the past, enough to identify it and have advantage over the plot, minimal as it was.

And he had tried to get into it, but not enough. He hadn't even gotten past the first few Batman comics to try to understand the key points, let alone Timothy Drake. Yes, the character.

So no, he didn't have any advantages. The worst part: he didn't have a system! Not even a mascot to pop in every now and then to say quirky one-liners and guide him in the right path. He'd really like to speak to the manager.

Timothy (not Jackson) Drake decides to try everything in his reach for a lack of a better idea. He opens a few drawers and stares, dumbly, at his assortment of clothes, thrice the amount he had in his homeworld.

Dear god, it's all red and black! All hoodies or oversized things. Not so different from his own wardrobe, but he liked to think he had a bit more style. Hey, is that a Superboy shirt?

After rummaging through the drawers he gets his hands on what he hopes is the charger for his phone. He connects it, and sets it back on the table, hoping that the price *he* didn't pay was worth how fast he needed it to turn on.

Stepping back, his feet bump into a laptop that rests on the floor under the bed quite ominously, just as expensive looking as the phone was, and Tim inspects it for a second before going to turn it on, half-expecting it to be dead or locked, but it's neither—hell, he clicks Space and it directly opens to the homescreen with an obscene amount of videogames and Word documents and Excels.

The picture that greets him, slotted in the perfect space in the middle among the videogames and documents is like a punch to the gut. It's a picture of... *Him*. Him and other people he doesn't recognize at first: three girls, a blonde and a ginger, and him, hugging a black-haired one while he holds a small cake. They're all wearing party hats, looking different degrees of excited, although the ginger woman looks fondly exasperated.

Tim regrets being so brusque in his movements as he scrambles to get to the full body mirror and his ribs scream even with the dull of the painkillers slowly taking over, but it's worth it when he sees it.

Or more like, when he sees *him*. It's like in the picture, but seeing *him* on his reflection instead of his own is nerve-wracking.

“What the actual...”

It takes all his willpower not to scream in that same moment.

“Hey, shouldn't he be up by now? I was half-joking when I told 'im not to wake until sunset,” Jason said, taking a sip of his cup of tea.

It's around four pm when he asks this, a bunch of hours since they returned from patrol earlier than usual. Hell, it was almost time for everyone to return from their own daily activities.

He was honestly beginning to get just a tiny bit weirded out by Tim's no show, normally he'd be up and about by now, even with two seconds of sleep in him, trying to work on his CEO stuff or get to his cases or just wander around the manor hoping Alfred will let him out. Like a cat would scratch the door to be let out.

Jason is only still here, in the living room of Wayne Manor, drinking tea and watching an old movie Alfred likes, because he wants to rub it in the kid's face that he had to save his sorry ass from the streets.

He had been a little confused when Tim had suddenly dropped unconscious on the asphalt, immediately after dealing with the simplest of goons that only managed to get a few punches

in. Jason had half the mind to make fun of him, at least until he realized he was not responding.

He'd had to drag Tim back to the Cave in record time, thinking the worst. Poison, venom, some sort of magic shit that put you in a coma. Some might say he, notorious crimelord Red Hood, was worried beyond his mind while he entered the medbay with the boy in his arms completely passed out, asking Alfred to help him, but no, Jason was nothing but professionally concerned. For his coworker.

In hindsight, he probably should've expected it when he first met up with the kid for patrol last night. He had been having a few odd days, acting all cranky and complaining about a constant headache he couldn't get rid of even with the strongest medication—hell, the whole time he was making low noises of pain and holding his head when he had free hands, so much that Jason considered just sending him home and getting through by himself.

Alfred said he was in an overall okay shape, but it was clear the exhaustion had caught up to him and left him on the floor as the adrenaline from the fight wore off. Finding it unnecessary to worry Bruce or anyone else, Jason put some excuse for the early return when asked and they just helped Tim out of his suit and let him rest on his room.

“Yeah, yeah. He's fine, his head was killing him so I brought him home to rest,” he told Bruce over comms after he opted to help Alfred out instead of going back there. Stephanie and Cass weren't even bothered when they were asked to split and cover for them, because it was almost the end of patrol anyway.

Still, Blondie told him both Tim and Jason owed them one. Yeah, as if.

“*No*, you don't *need* to get back early. You crazy? He's sleeping right now, like you wanted.”

Leave it to Batman to be so worried about one of his fledgelings if he had been doing poorly the last few days. Hell, that one singular time Cass got injured enough to be benched he had this pitiful look on him that said he didn't want to leave her alone, even if she had Alfred.

Overprotective? Please.

“I am watching him, old man,” Jason was honestly just so done. “I'll check on him every now and then. You want me to sit next to him and watch him sleep? Jesus.”

It was an unspoken rule that Jason was in charge of whoever was stuck on patrol with him, especially one of the brats. And Cass. And maybe Dick, when he visited. So having one of said brats pass out and maybe die in his care would not sit right with him. Ever since he settled in some okay terms with the Bats, agreeing to step into their roster of vigilantes and have a patrol buddy, he could almost say they were doing very good.

Seated next to him, Alfred hummed with a tinge of humor. “Perhaps Master Timothy is finally making up for all his hours of sleep lost in his life.”

There's a beat of silence before Jason huffs the closest thing to a laugh and Alfred smiles a little bit, in similar fashion.

“Yeah, as if.”

Tim couldn't help it, he was pacing in circles across the room with his hands on his hair, like a maniac.

His reflection had confirmed the worst possible outcome, and he only identified it because he, contrary to popular belief, had a great memory and had once seen a picture of Tim Drake the character during the Red Robin thingy. It's not as recognizable as Bruce Wayne or Tony Stark would be, but he does know who this is.

What were the chances he had transmigrated into the universe that had a character with his same name? Worse, into DC Comics?! The universe for guaranteed disaster? Aliens, apocalypse, magic anyone?

Here's what he knows: he was about to get hit by a truck after a frankly rude person decided to push him into the traffic, somehow he didn't die, and somehow he was alive and well in an unknown place that may or may not be another universe. What were the odds that he had *not* transmigrated?

“I don't know if well is the word I'd use,” Tim tells the mirror, as if it could somehow answer.

His reflection stares back, looking tired, bruised and overall not having a great time, and he understands what he saw before the accident, in the puddle. It was this... exhausted-looking, longer-haired version of him, in costume. Because he was Timothy Jackson Drake, from DC Comics, the damn Red Robin.

Sebastian fucking Ives would be *thrilled*.

“Hey kid,” a voice all deep and only slightly scary calls from the other side of the door, followed by a few knocks. “You alive in there?”

And who could this be?

Tim tries to think of a clever answer to give. What was Tim Drake's personality again? What was happening in his life currently? He remembers Sebastian saying he was a smarty, a little bit of a menace. But he once saw a TikTok saying Tim Drake was the smart Robin (as opposed to a... dumb Robin?), and another saying he was exhibiting clear signs of mental illness, which didn't help his case.

His mind decides his better option is to not answer.

“Is he seriously still sleeping?” mysterious guy mutters, but it's loud enough that he hears it.

Yes, you see, he's definitely sleeping.

Tim takes the opportunity to make his quiet way to the bedside table, where he picks up the phone and turns it on. It feels like an eternity as it reboots and finally, finally shows him something useful.

He had neglected to check the time and date before, but this confirmed it—it was still June 28th, 4:15 p.m, ninety-five minutes after his estimate for the time of the accident.

The unknown person outside nearly makes him jump out of his skin as he knocks again, a little bit more harshly. “Kid, I'm coming in to see if you're not dead and shit.”

Tim slides up the screen, hoping he had the same luck as he had with the laptop and—...

It's locked.

The door opens that same instant. A tall, bulky and dangerous-looking guy crosses it, and he was probably as startled to see him up as Tim is to see him in general.

Who the hell is this?

Chapter End Notes

hi welcome to 5 guys

SOOOO hi, first update i am sooo excited!!! i will be updating frequently since i am on break. chapters might get longer as i get used to them, but i really think we're in for a looong ride... i'll try to make it enjoyabe

also there's some, like, comments that might seem self-aware or about the dc fandom in itself because i love the idea of Tim being self-aware. some things might seem confusing for now buuut i promise i have great things and justifications coming

Chapter 3: #3. About good inference

Chapter Notes

CW: brief mention of throwing up

small Jay and Bruce povs because i like them :-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Uh, hey, Timbers...”

Tim nodded in acknowledgement at the intruder as he rubbed one of his eyes with the back of his hand and made it so it looked like he stifled a yawn. Maybe if he acted like he was still exhausted he would get a pass for his weird attitude.

How is he even going to figure out the way Timothy Drake the character acts on the regular when he knew nothing about the guy?

He turns back to the phone, catching the picture on the lockscreen's background. It's him and three other people, and it shouldn't make sense but they're the ones from the posters, only donning civilian clothes instead of hero suits: Superboy, Impulse and Wonder Girl... And him. They're hugging him as he takes a selfie, faces blurred just a bit by movement, but they're hugging him and smiling brightly, that much he can tell. Because he is part of their team, he *is* Red Robin.

Hey, there's the urge to throw up again.

“Can you get me... water, maybe?” he asked, trying to make himself sound sickly. They're (most likely) brothers! What would he be doing in Batman's house if they weren't? He should worry. “Please.”

Mystery guy blinked, and now that Tim saw him, that was probably Jason-fucking-Todd, standing there. That white streak is really recognizable, still below the level of coolness that Rogue from Marvel had with hers.

He'd seen a million edits of the Red Hood to know he definitely fit the description they gave of him in the comics. A mountain of a man, really. If he had the red helmet (hood?) on he'd recognized him easier, which didn't mean he knew jackshit about him as a character.

Tim can't remember for the life of him which one of the Batfamily members had been the one to beat Timothy Drake the character up. Sebastian definitely mentioned it in passing, mostly as a gag, but he hadn't been paying attention. He just hopes he's not standing in front of him right now.

(*“You know they're a vaguely dysfunctional family? I'm pretty sure everyone there has beat Tim up at least once.”*

“I'd be concerned if they hadn't all beaten each other up at some point in their careers.”)

“Sure. Be right back.”

Maybe-Jason-Todd walks away and Tim hears his steps going downstairs, which means his room is, at least, on a second floor. Good, it was great to be aware of his surroundings.

Filed away for later investigation, right now he needs to figure out how to unlock his phone, probably the key to solve all his problems.

Damn it, he should've read those comics when he had the chance, he wouldn't be this lost if he had humoured Sebastian just a little more.

Okay, there's a passcode to crack. Four numbers, easy enough. If he can get it right, he'll be saved. Timothy Drake the character should have a little bit of information about himself on his phone, right? Or maybe social media he could go through and get an overall layout of his life right now? He was a CEO, after all. Those tended to have Instagram, especially one as young as him.

He tries for his birthday, 0917. Incorrect.

Maybe they read it backwards? 1709. Incorrect.

...?

Then came the great frantic search in his mind for a combination that would make sense for him to have as a PIN for his phone. His civilian phone, at least, because he really doubted Red Robin only had one phone for both his civilian identity and his vigilante issues. What if he got kidnapped or mugged and some bad guy got their filthy hands on his phone?

He's so great at this vigilante mindset, he'll fit right in! (Not.)

“I didn't know if ya' wanted cold water or...” Jason reenters the room with a glass of what seems to be water at room-temperature. Okay.

Tim takes it, downs it in one go and returns to the phone with as little grace as you're probably imagining it, typing three more combinations before his phone warns him: *Hey little guy, if you are wrong two more times I will be locked for a gradually increasing amount of time!*

In Expensive Phone terms at least.

He types in the date of his parent's passing. Incorrect.

Tries again with his mom's birthday. Incorrect.

Locked for: thirty seconds.

He groans. 29, 28, 27...

“What'cha doing?” very-likely-Jason-Todd asks him.

“What does it look like I'm doing?” Tim tries, feeling exceptionally awkward. He can tell he looks the part, because Jason just stares at him like he grew a second head overnight.

It definitely does look like he's trying and failing to unlock his own phone at the moment, his fingers moving frantically in every single combination he could come up with that would mean anything to him. For the phone he... you know, owns. The one he set the password for. Tim is sure he can't emphasize it enough.

Why isn't his password the same across universes? Couldn't the universe or God make it easy for him, just once?

“Please get out.”

Definitely-Jason-Todd raises his hands in surrender, looking amused. “My bad? *Jeez*. What's up with you today?”

Helpful, actually! This must mean Tim is usually not this blunt. He'd have to mind that then? It shouldn't be hard. He was a polite kid and all, as Megan liked to say.

“Sorry Jay...” Tim mumbles out, trying hard to seem distraught so he can be left alone for a bit more. “I think I need more sleep. I feel a bit shitty. Can you...?”

He makes a vague gesture for him to get out, hoping he gets the memo.

“A bit is an understatement,” Jason sighs. Tim pretends he didn't hear it.

From what he understood, Dick, Jason, Tim and Damian were brothers. So it was fine if he called Jason... Jay, right? He'd never had any siblings to get reference from, not that he had parents to give him one, so he was pretty much exploring uncharted territory over here. Cut him some slack! He wasn't very interested in sibling dynamics in his homeworld, none of his friends had that sort of dynamic with him and most were only children too.

So, maybe the nickname was a not so good idea, because Jason looked even more awkward than before. Tim didn't know it was possible. Or was it about another thing entirely? Maybe he should've gone with Jace.

He can't stand to look at Jason struggling to find an answer to give him, so he doesn't, and averts his eyes back to the phone. The thirty seconds have passed by now, and he decides to give it another go with what he assumes should be his birth year here if the date is right and he *is* seventeen.

Incorrect.

“Right,” Jason gives in and turns around, awkward in all the ways. “I'll leave ya' to it then. Uh... B will get home very soon so I'll leave. You're not my problem anymore, since you're not dead or somethin'.”

Or something.

Right. How to tell him the other Tim is probably somewhere nice right now, like Heaven? Problem for future Tim. *Did Heaven exist in DC Comics?*

Jason is a bit harsh, but as he mentioned before Tim can't have a real-life reference of an actual older brother. He briefly thinks about Rodrick and Greg Heffley, and thinks that maybe it *is* like that. Comparing Rodrick Heffley from Diary of a Wimpy Kid to Jason Todd was not crazy, right?

After all, if Jason hated him, would he be here? Would he have left that note and those painkillers, even if he was asked to by this so-called A?

Tim is so damn sure *not*!

One of the brothers had a nicer relationship with Timothy Drake the character, that much he could recall, and right now he was a great 88% sure sure it was Jason, since Dick Grayson was in another city and Damian was like... little. This should be evidence enough.

Ha! Got you there. Jason *must* be the good brother. That's probably why he's popular with the ladies, he's a softie at heart. Hey, that hurt to say a little.

The note returns to his mind momentarily. If J is Jason, and B is Bruce, who is A? Do we have the whole abecedary here?

He'll figure it out later. For now he just nods and yawns a bit to completely sell it. “M'kay. Bye Jay. Be careful.”

He decides saying 'Love you' is way too familiar for his comfort, but in case he usually says it surely Jason won't find it weird if he's too tired to say it this once? It's a hit or miss. He'd be sure if he could unlock his phone...

Talking to Jason felt like talking to Megan, in a way.

He wonders how she's doing. Does she know by now? Maybe she doesn't. Maybe they're still working on recognizing his body, or maybe everything is frozen in time and none of this is actually happening and he's crazy and—...

The door closing with a bit more force than necessary as Jason leaves shakes him out of his spiral in progress. Hey, To-do list, remember?

“If I was my password, where would I hide?”

“Is he alright, Master Jason?” Alfred asks him as Jason returns and walks over to the living room. He is the perfect image of calm, if only slightly concerned if the slight crease of his

eyebrow is to judge.

“Yeah. He must be pretty damn tired because he's incredibly docile,” he crosses his arms over his chest, glancing back at where Tim's closed door should be upstairs. He would almost call it affectionate, but with *him*? Please. “He was out of it. Maybe all that Zesti finally turned his brain into mush.”

Enough to not remember his phone PIN, apparently.

Ugh, no matter that. He has so many questions aside for why Tim didn't remember how to unlock his phone, like what the hell was that *Jay* thing.

Sure, most people in the family called him Jay or any variation of it, but Tim wasn't really the type to refer to him like that—Jason this, Jason that, Hood this, Hood that, he remembered perfectly just how bossy the third Robin could be.

Hell, he'd say the only people he referred to with nicknames were Cass and Steph, who went by them anyway.

Bye Jay. Be careful. Careful? He'd be damn careful alright.

Was Tim threatening him or something?

“Did he seem in any pain?”

Jason thinks back on the image of Tim that had received him. Sitting on his bed, phone in hand while it charged, looking like he'd had the worst night of his life even though Jason had checked four times since they put him in his room and was sleeping like a baby every single time.

He did seem to find it hard to relax completely, his hand pressing to the side of his torso all the time Jason stood there.

“He was holding his side a bit,” he offers, to which Alfred only seemed thoughtful. “Maybe ya' should check on his ribs when he comes back down.”

“Yes, for sure. He's the type to hide injuries like this.”

Rolling his eyes at that was inevitable. Little Timmy who would rather take on twenty people by himself than ask for their reliable backup, being reckless with his health? Grass is green, everybody.

“Tell me about it, Alfie.”

The butler merely shakes his head and looks back at the TV, whispering something about how at least the boy had gotten some water.

Jason decides to sit back down on the couch, lean his head back and bask in the peace and quiet of the Manor, which wouldn't last very long, even though he had told Tim he'd leave.

It's not like he had anything better to do.

When he checked his phone, a few minutes later, he found that Dick had texted him.

Dickface (DO NOT REPLY #1)

How's Tim? 4:19 p.m

You

Alive 4:24 p.m

Fuck off maybe 4:25 pm

Have you considered texting him instead 4:27 p.m

Dickface (DO NOT REPLY #1)

I'll visit soon anyway ^^ 4:27 p.m

Big brother time 4:28 p.m

You

Dont you have a job?? 4:30 p.m

Grown ass man 4:30 p.m

Whatever 👍 4:31 p.m

Wrong one 4:31 p.m

🖕 4:31 p.m

Dick had the audacity to react with a heart to his messages. A *blue* heart.

Tim ends up going through his laptop for clues. Pictures are his best bet, so he sorts through them and finds the ones that are most birthday-like. He finds Cassandra, Stephanie, Barbara, Dick, Bruce, Jason and an older man he can't recall the name of no matter how hard he tries.

He tries Cassandra. 0126. Incorrect.

Stephanie. 0811. Incorrect.

Dick. 0320. Incorrect.

...Jason...? 0816. Incorrect.

0219. Incorrect. Wow, not even Bruce? Wasn't Tim that guy's son?

He'd have to figure out just what kind of dad Bruce was. In the Batman v Superman movie by Snyder he didn't look all that Dad Material... What if he was abusive or something angsty like that?

But how would he even adopt more children?

Hey, this was DC. Superboy was a clone, Starfire was very visibly an alien, Beast Boy... Beast Boy. And Cyborg, don't forget Cyborg! And Raven. And right now he's mentioning the Teen Titans Go cast.

Point is, how do you explain all that to the police and legal system? He really needs to investigate.

Right, so he's not close enough to anyone to have their birthday as his passcode if it's not his own. And if it's not within his family, he doubts it'd be within his superhero friends, whose birthdays he didn't know in the first place and they weren't in the laptop. Probably because they were superheroes, probably because they celebrated together *as* superheroes.

Maybe it's something about his addition to the family? Or the year he became Robin, which he had no way to know. Or something completely random and easy.

“Pfft... He wouldn't be so stupid...”

He tries 1234. Incorrect.

One more incorrect attempt will result in locking the phone for three minutes.

Think Tim, *think*!

4321.

In-co-rrect. Locked for three minutes.

(*“Tim Drake is a little pretentious,” Sebastian said while scrolling through his phone while draped all over Tim's sofa. The TV had long been forgotten, neither were too invested in CW series anyway.*

“I'm starting to think you don't like that guy,” Tim replied, distracted by his game of online chess. Who the fuck moved the horse back and forth across turns? What's this, the nationals?

“I do! But he's like, an annoying nerd. He has backup plans for his backup plans.”

“Sounds good to me.”

His friend hummed before resuming his scrolling. Thinking back on it, maybe he was reading comics online.

"I just think he's way too smart for his own good," Sebastian narrowed his eyes, amused. "Hey, like you."

"Don't even start.")

If he was Timothy Drake the character, pretentious, nerdy, a genius, traits probably gathered from extreme watering down of his character which tended to happen when you were passed around writers, what would he do for his password? Definitely not hide it somewhere in his room, how would he know an alternate version of him would end up in his body and need it?

...Unless that had happened before.

He could almost imagine it, except the voice was just his own. Hey, it's not fair. There must be some adaptation relevant enough to base it off, was Timothy Drake that forgotten in DC media?

If you're actually me, you'll be smart enough to figure it all out.

"Fuck you too," Tim grumbled, "I'm not doing that."

He laid back down so his head was hanging off the edge of the bed. The ache of his ribs made it hard, but he'd manage. He just needed a new perspective, and waiting until the blood accumulated in his head was probably worth it to be an option to consider. If he passed out again, would he wake up in his homeworld?

Okay, Jason said Bruce will come back soon. And so will Damian, Cass, Steph… Dick, maybe? No, no, he had his own city, as… Something-wing? He had seen that in Teen Titans Go, with the long hair!

(*"It's the whole point of his character, Tim!"*)

What does that mean for him? Danger? Nothing? Surely they'd realize…

Or not.

What is the worst option here? That they know or that they don't know? He'd feel a little bad for other Tim if no one in his family realized something was off, because he was not a good actor, in the slightest.

Tim buries his face in his hands, dragging them down slowly, suppressing a scream full of frustration out of pure spite. He will not succumb to the pressure! He was Timothy-fucking-Drake no matter what that truck had to say. He had survived before, he could survive this.

"I'm sorry," he hopes somewhere his friend knows he's sorry. Somewhere. If he had the ability, he'd cry about it, but he wasn't one to cry easily. "I should've paid more attention to your stupid comic ramblings…"

He would never really see them again, would he? Sebastian, Tam, Ariana, Megan. Anyone, really.

“You'd probably know what to do now. Hell, you'd probably even have a fucking field day with this…”

Can't help but think back on the pictures in his laptop. It makes sense that Red Robin’s life is not limited to what is shown in the comics, as a real human’s would be, but still, it's like navigating an ocean of infinite questions with no one to help him through it. He's stranded in the damn Pacific Ocean with a sailboat and a PB&J sandwich, and he doesn't like PB&J!

From the gaps between his fingers, Tim’s eyes find themselves fixated on a frame under the bed, unbelonging in the floor with how expensive it looked, barely peeking out but just within his line of sight when he's laying like this. They narrow in an attempt to discern what he was seeing exactly.

It's a picture like many others he has scattered across his messy room, but he's stuck on why it *feels* important to him. Maybe because it's an unconventional place to keep a picture. Is it broken?

He reaches out for it, carefully pulling it from under the bed and bringing it closer to his face to inspect it. *It's not broken*, he thinks first, but then it is like the air was punched out of him when he recognized those faces.

There he saw… his parents. With him in the middle. His mother sat with her legs perfectly straight and her face carefully schooled into a neutral smile, resting a hand on small Tim's shoulder. His father was on the opposite side, with his hand on his back while he sported that typical, dad-like smile of his.

His mother's hair was lighter and longer than he remembered and his father was a bit older-looking but they were… them. With him. And even though it looks like a picture a businessman would take with his family for the articles, all professional and sober, he can't help but feel warm.

Timmy the character had to be around ten there, if he had to guess. Five more years than what Tim had gotten with his own parents back in his homeworld, who knew how many more?

Careful not to rip it, Tim pulls the picture out of the frame to hold it between his fingers like one would a fragile object. And then he turns it over, hoping to find the date it was taken.

There isn't a date, but there is indeed something written, in the opposite direction the picture faced. That is, upside down.

Jack and Janet Drake with their son, Timothy Drake.

Hey, wait, wait, rewind that.

Jack and Janet?

His parent's names weren't those.

Tim sat up on the bed so fast he got a bit of whiplash and his ribs protested again, but this was clearly more important.

In fact, thinking about it carefully, he'd call those names the opposite of his parents' names, Jacqueline and James Drake.

Wait a fucking second.

Opposite?

Tim goes back to the phone with a bit of a shake in his hands, and taps the numbers, slowly. It gives him a dramatic anticipation he's probably never going to recreate, ever again.

0719. July 19th, instead of September 17th, reversed in the only way his birthday would make sense while using the same numbers.

It unlocks, and he's met with his homescreen. He immediately spots Instagram.

"Fuck yeah!"

It's not that Timothy Drake the character would have a different password than Tim had, at least in a civilian context, in fact he had the same thought process as when Tim set up his very first phone.

It just so happened that everything here that he knew from his own world was reversed. Upside down. Opposite.

Everything except… him?

"Sorry about today, miss Fox… Tim was feeling particularly bad this morning, I couldn't possibly make him come to work like that," Bruce told the young assistant as they made their way out of the Wayne Enterprises building, holding the door for her. She smiled, barely.

It's half an hour later than their usual, but Tamara doesn't look bothered by that. The mild, easily dismissed as exhaustion, tension in her expression was about another thing entirely.

She didn't enjoy working with him, not like she did with Tim, but she hid it well. The girl clearly had some opinions on why Tim wasn't cared for properly by his family. If he was not Batman, he'd probably miss on the clues.

"I told him to take a break, but alas, it's like talking to a wall…" Tamara says, shaking her head.

You don't even have to tell me, thought the man with a sigh.

“I told him to go see a doctor too,” she continued as they finally left the main entrance behind. Each had a car waiting for them on different sides of the sidewalk. “About those headaches. Please, Mr. Wayne, make sure he sees a specialist.”

Bruce looks a bit more serious at that. He knew the constant headaches were bad, but not to the point of this. “I will, Miss Fox. Please leave the worrying to me.”

The girl shrugged, and began to walk away to her own car with a special kind of irritation. “It's hard to. Do have a nice evening, Mr. Wayne.”

A final nod is all he gets.

Bruce lets out a small sigh once she's gone.

Tim has been worrying him more than usual, which is a bit uncommon. Before the whole timestream fiasco, Bruce found it relatively easier to keep tabs on him than he did with the rest of his sons. He was almost grateful that he never had to worry too much about Tim, because that boy was independent and stubborn, maybe a bit reckless, but he always made it work.

Somehow, in ways Bruce will never understand.

(*“Rought night?”*

“For them,” his Robin had replied, sitting there with a gunshot wound and a few nasty bruises littering his body and a bit of his face, right after taking on a group by himself.

Batman half wanted to scold him, but he didn't. He merely shook his head and helped him up.)

Getting into the car and starting the engine was a blur, as was picking Damian up from his classmate’s house, where he'd gone right after school to work on a project, and starting the way home.

“Everything good today?” the man asked his youngest son, looking at him through the rearview.

Damian seemed tired, his voice a little quieter than usual, and there was no trace of his clipped replies. “Yes, Father. Optimal.”

Bruce smiled, a private thing, and nodded, letting the radio station fill the silence for him.

He was momentarily distracted by the road ahead, at least until he stopped at a red light and his phone pinged with a message from Jason.

Before, the world had to be ending for Jason to call him, let alone *text* him, and he was pretty sure he had both Dick and him added with “Do Not Reply” next to their names in his phone, but lately they had been making progress. At least he now had them added in his phone.

He thinks. He hopes.

He checks it, thinking of a few worst-case scenarios.

Jason

I think your son Tim should see a doctor 5:57 p.m

Like, yesterday 5:57 p.m

How long until you get home? 5:57 p.m

…What?

His hands tighten around the wheel and his foot presses down on the accelerator with a little more force than legally accepted, trying to make that ten-minute drive to the manor into three. If Damian notices the sudden shift, he doesn't say anything.

Chapter End Notes

hi it's me again take a shot for every time Tim says Tim/Timothy Drake the character

SORRY IF THESE CHAPTERS SEEM SHORT???? i once saw someone write a 15k chapter & i was like hi... hi how are u doing that. im just very used to getting my point across in few words & im not really into overcomplicating things NOT THAT IT'S BAD TO WRITE LONG LONG CHAPTERS I ACTUALLY LOVE THEM i just can't do it. i think each chapter ends where it should so i hope it doesn't feel cutoff(?

so wow... hi Timmy how's the meatgrinder. i like writing this Tim because he's lowkey mischaracterizing everyone & himself too he's messy like that and i love just how little he knows about anything. but i get it dctok is infested with misinformation & he dgaf in his homeworld so he's like, working with what Ives once told him and the two or three tiktoks of "sMaRt RoBin, AnGrY RoBiN"... please get out

so Jason is like... hi... wtf. this will continue to happen AND we will continue to laugh at Tim's short & mixed-up knowledge of these people because he definitely should have paid attention when he had the opportunity & watched Teen Titans Go properly

so maybe that last part No.

yes Jay over here might be a little softened in Tim's pov for a bit (enter Unreliable Narrator tag! everyone in this fic is an unreliable narrator ouhh #Watdatmean), but he's not BAD or EVIL or anything like that. He has good intentions but some bad thoughts sprinkled over there

he'll definitely get much better though, just like the rest of the batfam heheh

but hey, plot!

might get to another update today!! i am so Timpilled!!!

Chapter 4: #4. Are you kidding me? I got transmigrated with my anxiety included?

Chapter Notes

CW: this is a heavier chapter—Tim is spiraling and gets progressively worst through most of the second half, but it is unfortunately crucial to understand his train of thought and big part of his characterization here.

he is experiencing an anxiety attack, even if it takes him a hot minute to recognize and call it that. nobody helps him out of it, or at least he doesn't acknowledge them at any point. Tim gets himself out of it, actually, and mentions previous anxiety attacks, like an awful lot.

mentions of death. car accidents caused by drunk drivers and Tim's own accident as well as its possible consequences (aside from death) are briefly alluded to

please take care of yourself <3

small Bruce pov at the beginning!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I dunno, he just seems off. More than usual,” Jason tells him, whisper-shouting while they stood together in the kitchen. This wouldn't lead to an open argument if Bruce could help it.

His son seemed a little more tense than usual, even while trying to play it off by leaning against the counter with his arms crossed, he would almost call it worry.

A brief sense of pride flashes across his chest. The thought that Jason cared enough, or was at least mindful enough of Tim's struggle to feel the need to remind Bruce to do his job as a father in person and not through an angry call. Like he did when Damian got injured and consequently benched in a less than ideal way, which was his mistake.

Jason considered them family, one way or another, even if only in the sentiment of wanting to protect them from Bruce's mess-ups. He made that abundantly clear.

“You know how he has been these past few days, and the shitty year he had overall,” the irritation in Jason's tone is not lost on him. Nobody likes to talk about what went down during Batman’s supposed death, so he never pressed. Might have been an oversight on his part. “I'd be surprised if the kid didn't have some sort of brain damage from all those things that happened.”

Bruce winced, because his older son was right. Getting him back to their time had taken a toll on Tim in more than one way, and while he had been adjusting relatively well as the months progressed, from what Bruce could see anyway, the last two weeks had been like the ring of ominous bells signaling a disaster was near.

He should've worried more about the incidents, the things Tim got himself into, like the one with Captain Boomerang.

“I'm just saying. You might need to drag him to the doctor, but you *need* to do it,” Jason added when Bruce didn't say anything for a long moment.

“I know. I'm just thinking about how to approach the subject,” he replied.

Jason seemed a little exasperated at that. “You're his damn father, Bruce. He should listen to ya'.”

I'm your father too, he wanted to say, but decided against it at the very last second. He sighed and sent a pained look in Damian's direction, who hadn't bothered to get to his room to take a nap, practically passed out on the couch right next to both Alfreds, butler and cat, while still wearing his uniform.

Bruce looked back at Jason, finding green-tinged eyes looking at him already. “I will fix this.”

“You better. I'm outta here,” Jason brushed past him with one last upset look before making his way to the main door. He didn't slam it as he left, perhaps aware it would disturb the pair sleeping boys currently occupying the house.

Offering him to stay is pointless, so Bruce doesn't. He is left standing in the kitchen by himself with a million thoughts to sort through, but the priority right now was Tim.

Whatever the issue was, Bruce would fix it, no matter what.

Tim goes through his phone in record time right after unlocking it and learning a very important thing about this new world. Everything he thought to know from his homeworld? Forget it, it's the complete opposite here, maybe in isolated ways. He didn't even know what that entails, because his parents had switched names but not places—his mom was still his mom, his dad was still his dad, they looked the same.

But he can't even look most of the questions he had up on the internet. He was under the same roof as The Batman, a paranoid detective and a possibly Average-to-Bad Dad! What if he spied on his Google history or something creepy like that?

So no, for now Tim was writing down important stuff in one of the discarded notebooks he found in the room. And while it was a personal insult to whoever had created an organized,

aesthetically pleasing way of organizing notes, it worked efficiently.

Things he knows:

> He is Timothy Jackson (!) Drake. He is most likely seventeen years old. He was born on July 19th. He is Red Robin. He was adopted by Bruce Wayne at some point. His parents are dead. His parents names' are Jack and Janet.
>
> He is CEO of Wayne Enterprises. Article said he was emancipated and given the position earlier that year.
>
> He has three brothers (Dick Grayson, Jason Todd & Damian something) and two(?) sisters (Cassandra & Stephanie, last names to discover) & one great family friend that appeared often in his pictures (Barbara, last name to discover)
>
> He is friends with superheroes. Superboy, Wonder Girl, Impulse. Is he supposed to recognize them? Maybe not. Hey, what were the odds you and your friend group shared hair colors and overall build with a superhero group? Did Wonder Girl have a secret identity at all?
>
> Should find a way to fix all this before anyone realizes what's wrong. Keywords: find, fix, return, undo.
>
> Possible emergency explanations: amnesia.
>
> Poison Ivy and Harely Quinn are (maybe) in a romantic relationship.
>
> One of his brothers must be an acrobat.
>
> Bruce Wayne is Batman, Jason Todd is Red Hood-

Thinking about it, did he really have to write down everyone's vigilante identities? It's not like he knew most of them anyway... Which one of them was Batgirl again?

Figuring out Dick's vigilante name was a priority, curse him for never actually watching that one TTG episode enough to catch it. He just laughed at the edits of Robin storming in and kicking his future self.

Also Robin brushing his teeth in the car. That was so funny.

Maybe he could coax it out of Jason, one way or another. It would be weird if he didn't know his brother's vigilante codename, right? No matter the bad terms they were possibly in.

A knock on his door startles him into dropping the notebook and pen, instinctively shoving them under the unnecessary large assortment of pillows. He can't find a good way to hide the picture of his parents without risking folding it, so he doesn't. Surely the other person wouldn't mind? They're his parents.

“Tim?” the voice resembled Jason's in a way, but more gravely. Almost... dad-like? He's so sure he recognizes the tone from somewhere.

It clicked into place right that instant. This is definitely Bruce Wayne. His dad. Adoptively, but his dad. He might mind a lot of things, especially the mess that is Tim's room. Maybe he should've cleaned without permission after all.

Wait, he's not ready! He hasn't had a dad in at least twelve years! Wait, wait, pause, give him a break.

“Yeah?” he decides to call out after a beat, hesitant. His voice cracks and he winces. What the hell? He's seventeen, not fourteen.

“May I come in?”

Tim decides to leave the picture be, next to him, too scared of ripping it somehow in his rush to hide it.

“Okay.”

And come in he did. Standing in Tim's room (you know what he means) was Bruce-fucking-Wayne, still in his businessman attire with his tie only slightly loosened around his nack. But it was him. Batman. Maybe not right now but it. was. him. Batman!

Don't freak out, don't freak out, don't freak out.

But... *Batman*!

I know I didn't read your comics to the end and I know nothing about you as Bruce Wayne aside from the terrible Snyder movies but this is the most epic moment of my life…

…He doesn't look like Ben Affleck, hello? Is Tim disappointed? A little. He thought it fit him. He really needs to find out how Superman looks.

He must look about to pass out where he sits, hugging his legs to his chest and resting his chin atop his knees in a poor way of appearing casual, because Bruce's expression pinches with concern. Tim barely caught it, because gosh this guy is a little inexpressive…

“Is... something wrong?” Tim ventures to ask, squirming a little when nothing happens. He feels the scrutiny. If he thought Tam's was bad he takes it back, this is worse.

Bruce approached his bed and sat on the edge, just close enough to comfortably reach for his forehead with his hand, trying to determine if he had a fever. Which, he didn't, but the touch was so nice he leaned into it without thinking, long since accepted he was starved for any form of physical affection.

“That's what I wanted to ask you. Jason said you had a rough patrol yesterday and slept through the afternoon,” Bruce’s hand moves to his cheeks, but he won't find any abnormal heat anywhere. He's not feverish, but he is definitely playing into the exhaustion and dull

ache of his body to possibly gain a way out of acting normal. “You didn't even go down to eat.”

He… did? Yeah! Dude, totally. The worst patrol ever… He is definitely a vigilante and patrols.

He gives a try at his usual responses, unsure of how to proceed as Timothy Drake. He was practically going in blind, so he had to find a neutral ground that wasn't too suspicious. “Not a big deal. He's exaggerating a little.”

Bruce’s mouth twitches briefly, but he doesn't look weirded out so that's a sign he's going somewhere, not straying too much from his characterization.

He did not want to unpack just how creepy that was to say.

“I think… You should go see a specialist, chum. It's not good for you to have these constant headaches, they're making everything harder for you,” it's laid on him as if it was a big deal that he had to see a doctor, so Tim tries to frown a little and look displeased, in hopes that is what his dad expects.

Okay, headaches. Good to know his other self suffered headaches and everyone seemed to be aware. Filed away as important information, he decided he could use those to get out of a lot of situations—the only downside would be that if he was actually sick or affected with something, it would suck big time.

Personally, he didn't mind doctors that much. Tim hated getting sick and avoided them if he could, if only to not bother Megan with common stuff that he could figure out how to treat by himself at home. But he wasn't scared of them or anything like that.

“Okay. But only ‘cause… I feel really weird,” he adds, pitifully. It's not even a full lie.

Tim leans forward so his forehead rests against Bruce’s shoulder. When he feels him freeze under his touch, he realizes maybe this is not how their dynamic goes at all and Bruce is indeed abusive or at least not very Dad-like, but his adoptive father reaches out to place a hand on his shoulder a bit awkwardly and helps him settle more comfortably against him before he can think to pull away.

“Weird how?”

“I… don't know. I just…”

But he does know. At first he wanted to follow on the whole ‘justify weird behavior with some sort of discomfort or illness that may or may not be here’, but he did feel weird that's the thing, because what the hell is he doing?

What is he doing, talking to Bruce Wayne and calling him dad? Acting like the man’s son? The hell?

Here, he had his mom and dad for longer and got to know them well. And he was rich, before and after, born into riches. And he didn't have to worry about his only living relative deciding

to kick him out and into the foster system because she got tired of him. And he had brothers and sisters and friends. A lot of friends, it seems! Superhero friends, because he was a goddamn vigilante, Red Robin, and he was Batman's son. He had a good life, so why was Tim so damn lacking back in his homeworld?

Why was it not him? Was there anything he could've done differently to get a better life?

Was he just destined to be lonely? Did he do something wrong? He always felt like he did something wrong, even if it was beyond anyone but the drunk driver's control whether his parents died that night or not. *There was nothing you could do, Tim, you were five.*

He was five and his teacher told his parents he was a genius, but for so long he has felt like an absolute idiot. Even now, he's off-balance and at disadvantage, risking so much, because this is not his world or his life but it could've been.

Tim thinks crying about it is a bit embarrassing, so he doesn't. He tries not to, at least. A difficult task, of titanic proportions even, because he feels warmth behind his eyes and a knot forming in his throat. Is he in shock?

Bruce shushes him gently when he lets out a tiny, choked out sob. He sounds a bit alarmed. "What's wrong?"

Tim shakes his head almost frantically. He can't say what's wrong, and he can't invent anything that would fit Timothy Drake the character because he is not him and does not know him in the slightest, no matter the shared name or the resemblance Sebastian insisted they share. He was not him, and he should tell Bruce, but he was so scared.

If Tim is here, then where is the other one, the *real* one?

He hopes not back in his own universe, because there was nothing to go back to. But also, Tim really doesn't want the original to return if his own fate is to die. He wanted a new life, yes, but he didn't want to die like that.

"Tim?"

Bruce seems at a loss for words at his reaction, so his son must not be the emotional type, and Tim briefly wonders if he's putting him in an awkward situation with his own burdens. If he was in any situation, he'd almost find the expression on Bruce's face after seeing him on the verge of tears, funny.

Too bad, I went to therapy one (1) time and read psychology books to understand movies, I know all about healthy coping mechanisms, and unfortunately I can and will cry a little if something messed up happens.

Like switching universes and realizing he is most likely dead back home, therefore putting him in a situation where he really doesn't want to go back but also doesn't want to stay. Stay in the universe of DC Comics, that is.

The main one, he supposes.

He pulls away fast when many things dawn on him at once. The embarrassment for his sudden outburst of emotion doesn't possibly compare to the fear that tugs at his chest when he understands it, and he covers his face with his hands in an attempt to ground himself.

His brain is a mess, he can't put together any words to talk himself out of his spiraling after putting it on hold ever since he woke up in a strange place with a family that is not his and a face that shouldn't look like this.

Trying to figure it all out was what he did when he couldn't deal with the stress, but it was dawning on him that he couldn't fix any of this.

Remembering all those times he talked himself through a breakdown was useless, because he couldn't possibly compare those banal situations like getting mocked in his junior year by older guys with the reality that was here and now. Isekai'd, transmigrated. How in God's green earth did the protagonists never lose their mind like this? Did they just… accept it? Was it just too heavy to include in the usually lighthearted story? Because he felt heavy.

Tim might not have liked his other life. Hell, before getting here he was wishing for another one, but that didn't mean he wanted to end up here.

"Sorry," Tim offers once the uncomfortable silence has gone for too long. Apologizing was a good start, someone told him. "I just…"

Want to leave? Want to go back to my miserable life?

No, he really wanted to sleep. And a warm meal, with a blanket, and tea while he's at it, because he read online that it helped calm one's nerves. And he wanted his mom and dad.

"I have to go."

He got up from the bed fast, so suddenly he could actually catch how it startled Bruce, as minimal of a reaction as it was. Tim's hands immediately went to his own ribs, which somehow felt worse than before even if the painkillers should've helped, and he held back a wince as he refrained from doubling over in pain—but nothing mattered if not getting out of the room and maybe out of the house to have a breakdown where no one could find him.

It was just like middle school, when he refused to have any mental breakdowns or show any signs of having a hard time in front of other people, especially his friends or Megan, an unfairly common occurrence when you're going through adolescence parentless, feeling friendless and… everythingless.

It wasn't even Megan's fault that he was such a mess, because for starters he wasn't even her kid, he didn't see any sense in her trying to fix something she hadn't broken. She never, ever tried past the minimum, and he knew she wasn't stupid.

Maybe Timothy Drake the character thought something similar with Bruce, because he's adopted.

Is he projecting? He thinks so.

Experiences shape people, and they definitely didn't have the same experiences, not the ones that matter anyway. The Timothy of this world wasn't raised (not raised, more like kept alive) by a relative that didn't care that much, just like Tim hadn't become a vigilante, because those were fictional things.

“I’ll see a doctor soon enough, don't worry Dad,” Tim gave a small, uncomfortable smile, before making his merry way towards his door in a step far too quick to fake calm, stumbling only a little bit. What even is this mess of a room?

He doesn't even try to find shoes to put on. He's so willing to walk away from the manor barefoot until he finds his own place, because he definitely has one. He saw it in some of the photos, and when he looked his name up on the web he found an article on how he, Timothy Jackson Drake, aged 17, CEO of Wayne Enterprises, was a symbol for young men who worked hard and didn't depend on their parents. At some point his emancipation had been mentioned, so he guessed his stay at Batman’s house was only a convenience after patrol.

If he was lucky he would find a way out of here and get something to eat somehow, because he was so damn hungry and unwilling to continue a breakdown on an empty stomach. His mind was running at a thousand miles per hour, but not a single thought stuck—it was like watching them go at an unnatural speed around himself, like a carousel.

To-do list, to-do list. First fix everything you can, just like you fixed that window, just like you fixed yourself, just like you tried fixing everything back home and it never quite stuck. Something, something… Cover the sun with one finger.

The hall seems endless and even with the sun coming through the windows he can't help but feel trapped in a horror movie. Large halls are fitting for what he believed to be a mansion, or perhaps it is his reality warping in on itself with the heavy realization that there is no way out or back. He's here and he has to fix something.

Tim stops by one the million windows he passes and stares at his reflection, feeling exactly how he looks: crazy. Wide-eyed, breathing heavy and with his hair looking like a mess from pulling on it earlier—how is it possible to get eyebags this bad? In his universe, all he did was sleep. Sleep, sleep, sleep, waste away. Was that the opposite, too?

He runs his hands through his face and up his hair. What the fuck? *What the fuck.*

“Drake?”

People have taken a real liking to scare his soul out of his body today by sneaking up on him, haven't they. The only thing that makes him hold back a scream is just how hard he is finding to breathe in the first place, let alone produce any sounds.

When Tim looks away from the window and towards the voice that called him, he finds a small boy standing in front of him, with a cat in arms.

Is this… Damian?

“What are you doing?” the kid asks. He seems mostly harmless, and sleepy. And he's holding a cat. If Tim wasn't so preoccupied with his maybe-panic-attack, he'd think of it as cute.

Sebastian wasn't a big fan of his character and rarely mentioned him, so he knew next to nothing about the boy. Nada, zero, nichts.

“Nothing.”

Green eyes narrow, blue eyes dart away and back to his reflection.

The thing is, that is his voice saying things and his face reflecting the anguish he feels, but this is not him. He definitely didn't look like this yesterday, when he was having chili dogs for dinner by himself, watching Sherlock Holmes and mindlessly scrolling through Instagram. Tim had seen himself the day before, in the bathroom while washing his hands, and it wasn't like this.

“Dad is… over there,” Tim forces out, pointing vaguely at where Tim's room is and turning away to resume his… escape. Tactical retreat, he'd say if asked about it.

“Where are you—”

Tim interrupts him with a barely-there apology and breaks into a sprint to reach the stairs and practically jump down through them, ignoring the harsh pain flaring at his middle and *god,* his ribs were definitely broken, or at least a bit cracked.

He steps wrong on the very last section and only prevents the fall by grabbing onto the stair rail for dear life. Tim can vaguely register pain when he gets up again, but he is so willing to ignore that.

The world is a blur around him as he practically makes a run for it, reaching the big doors and struggling to open them.

Nothing and no one is chasing him for now, but he still turns back to check while he works on getting out. It's a bad move on his part, because when he finally gets the doors open and tries to walk (run) out, he immediately stumbles into someone and nearly knocks them both over.

The other person doesn't even hesitate before wrapping their arms around him, stabilizing him before he can fall, again.

“Tim?”

When he looks up, a girl with black hair and brown eyes is looking at him, curiously. Huh. She tilts her head a little, and he has a feeling he is being analyzed thoroughly.

His body feels safe with her, he notices, and suddenly escaping doesn't feel like the best option. Tim thinks he can't make it clear enough—he doesn't know this girl, but his body, as if it was a separate entity from his consciousness, did. And it relaxed as soon as he was in her arms, more than Tim himself was willing to.

No, he has to get out...

“Cass…” he mumbles, only as a confirmation to himself that this is definitely the girl from all those pictures. The contact on his phone saved as Cassie and the girl on his laptop lockscreen and his most recent chat where he had sent a picture of a very round plushie with the caption being ‘LOL Jason’ (whatever that means) and she had reacted with a heart. His… sister?

I don't know anything. I don't even know this girl, and she is supposed to be my sister, isn't she?

Her calm voice asked, as she helped him stand properly, holding him up by the elbows as his legs began trying to cooperate again. “What happened?”

“I-I don't know…” he's so close to hyperventilating, and apparently doing a poor job at hiding it, because Cass frowns in concern at the rough quality of his voice and the way he seems to choke the words out.

“Tim,” Bruce calls from behind him as he approaches the two, and he doesn't understand why his body locks up so tightly.

This hadn't happened before, why was it reacting to people now? And why was it feeling so negatively towards Bruce, his dad? It's not even about his presence, that much he can tell, but something in his tone makes it worse.

When he glances back, he feels light-headed as he takes one good look at Bruce's concerned expression. Damian trails after him, and soon enough Tim finds himself surrounded, which did little to help with his current predicament.

He turns back to Cass and hides his face against her shoulder, trying to think. Think, think, think. Tim is good at that, think, now.

Cass guides them both to take a step back without letting go, and Tim doesn't see her do it, but he's pretty sure she shakes her head at Bruce. Whatever silent conversation they're having about him is definitely not something he wants to see, so he follows Cass' lead without any protest.

He oscillates between being absolutely freaked out and trying to revert to his original calmness by repeating in his head, over and over: There is nothing wrong. His mother used to say that when he asked her to check for monsters under the bed and inside his closet.

It's fine, it's fine. Hey, everything is fine. There's no monster. He's very fine actually, in protection of one of the most capable heroes out there.

There are people talking around him and he's sure they're moving, but he barely hears them or feels anything. Their voices barely break through the rush of white noise that fills his ears, making it hard to understand what they're saying without concentrating.

“...hyperventilating…”

“...Can't stand on-... own...”

“...don't know what… -ened…”

Tim is fine.

He has fixed things that seemed impossible. He fixed it when Megan got upset at him. He fixed it when he messed all his romantic relationships up. He fixed it when Megan forgot to pick him up from school and he figured the way home.

That's what he needs now. He needs to figure the way home. Spiraling will get him nowhere, now will it?

He knows the most important thing: everything he knew, everything he was familiar with that could've been retained across universes, all that is somehow turned upside down. Timothy Drake was a prodigy with wasted potential to most, a diamond in the rough nobody wished to take the burden of polishing themselves, but he had to have some sort of brain to think!

If he got into this universe, there must be a way out. Some sort of… entrance that would double as an exit.

And then what? the most selfish part of him says. Some would call it thinking about your own survival, but it only felt unfair. After complaining so long about how unfair his life was, he was bound to have doubts about making someone have the same faith as him, but not enough. *You'll get back to the universe where you died because someone pushed you into the traffic and a truck hit you? Good luck with that.*

He would be lucky if he had died, actually. If he didn't, he doesn't even want to think of the state his body would be in. And then he would he wish the accident had killed him, because he had seen people victim to accidents that survived, and it was not a pretty mental image.

There must be a way. There has to be. If not, he'll die trying to make one, and he really doesn't like the idea of dying a terrible death right now, thanks! So trying it is.

“Tim, can you hear me?”

Bruce is speaking to him, and when his eyes refocus, opening them back despite having forgotten the moment he had closed them, they're no longer standing outside. At some point they had moved back inside the house and, embarrassingly, he finds that he is still clinging to Cass like a little kid.

His hands, previously closed into fists and pulling on the fabric of Cass’ shirt, relaxed until he felt like he could let go completely.

Hey, there he is! Crisis averted. Panic Attacks 108, Tim 1... For now, because every time he had one he had to reset.

Tim had geniused his way out of it! He was a bit proud and all.

“I'm fine,” he manages to get out as he stepped away from Cass, who lets go of him after a single moment of hesitation. Embarrassingly, he sniffles, and rubs his eyes with his hands. “It's fine. Sorry about that.”

Tim can't look anyone in the eye while he says it, but they have to believe him because he's no longer hyperventilating or anything like that. In fact, even if it takes him a bit, he can finally take a deep breath and regulate the next.

“Bud, it is definitely not fine,” Bruce says, Brucely. Dad-ly. Also, *bud*? That's new. He was calling him by name in his room. “What happened?”

“I just…” he starts, but loses his train of thought.

Did Timothy Drake not have panic attacks in the presence of his family, then? Maybe it was completely out of character to break down like that, and right now he was digging himself further into a hole he'd have no way out later.

Back in his homeworld, the school counselor told him to see an actual therapist about the constant anxiety attacks he was presenting that had him stay at her office often. And he did, like he mentioned, one time.

Did the character… not have those? Or did he and no one knew? Or did Tim really cross the universe with his untreated anxiety?

I suppose that's still part of my soul, he thinks, defeated.

Somebody lend him a comic, he had to be the judge of that! He’ll diagnose the guy himself, he's an expert.

“I think I need help,” he mutters while holding his arm. Help in more than three things because his ribs hurt like hell and he is pretty sure his ankle was not that color last time he checked.

When he looks up, Bruce, Cass and Damian look at him like he's crazy, in varying degrees. The girl looks almost emotional, but he can't tell why.

Is he crazy? Was asking for help a crime punished by the law?

Oops?

Chapter End Notes

small cw for my rant: mentioned suicidal tendencies & anxiety attacks

OOF heavy, isn't it? oh Timmy you have NO idea

this is based on my own personal experience as someone who had consistent anxiety attacks from a young age & had to find my way out by myself. ive seen some methods like the things you can see smell hear etc... but they personally never worked for me when i'm having one 😭 i do think they can work depending on the person but idk im programmed different or something, so don't expect those here because i can't understand how they work. if they work for u maybe lmk so i can understand the perspective...

while i do believe og Tim (let's call him that) is indeed passively suicidal just like the rest of his family, i do believe the Timmy dropped in his shoes wouldn't be like that AFTER actually getting close to death in the way he did

he's just a kid, no vigilante training, no weekly near-death experiences, no real support system, no parents and a few unspecified disorders under his belt but A LOT of interest in psychoanalysis of characters—part of his character is realizing he is indeed scared of dying, scared enough that he wants to live & solve the mess he's in & live

in the future there might be references to being passively suicidal, but i do think Timmy can see the way out in asking for HELP. & it takes him less effort because of how vulnerable he feels... yk with that whole Being Transported Into DC Comics thing

he has, fortunately, never been subjected to the emotional constipation of the batfamily., at least not yet. it's funny but all his futurely displayed emotional intelligence (?) for the situation does NAWT come from being raised properly he's just great like that (that & a million different medias consumed throughout his life)

SOOOOO i hope u guys enjoyed it. it is a bit hard for me to get a grasp on most emotions while writing, but i hope i conveyed them decently enough. tysm for reading & see u soon!

Tim, constantly: oh they're waiting for me to act upset... this is like roleplaying but worse

- Sumi ❤

(hey i'll start signing my end notes)

Chapter 5: #5. Can't You See Me?

Chapter Notes

CW: minor injuries, mentions of panic attacks

Dick & Cass mini povs ^_^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dick was having an overall good evening.

His plan for the day had been: work, supermarket, sleep. The supermarket he frequented was even a little less crowded than usual, and he was peacefully going through the list of ingredients he needed for a new recipe he saw online and looked easy enough when his phone buzzed in his pocket.

Seems like the search for the perfect tomato will have to be paused momentarily.

“Hello?” he says, as he brings the phone to his ear. The voice he recognizes greeting him on the other line makes him smile a little, and he settles the phone on his shoulder to continue picking through tomatoes. “Oh, B! Hi, what's up?”

The tomatoes are not looking so good over here. He can see some dark spots in most of them, ugh… Who even was in charge of this section? Some of these are clearly a breath away from rotten. Is this legal?

“It's Tim,” his father says.

Dick drops the tomato in his hand immediately, wincing as it falls and—...

He might as well describe it as an explosion, because as soon as it touched the ground, there was tomato in more places than it should be. Well, confirms it was in a very bad state at least.

The poor girl cleaning spilled milk a few meters away from him looked up, met Dick's eyes, then looked at the frankly repulsive spill of tomato on the floor and sighed heavily. Her expression was so resigned to the fate of cleaning the mess he just made that Dick felt really bad for her.

Damn it all, Bruce. You can't just drop that on someone, all cryptic and… lacking vital details. “What is it about Tim? Is he okay?”

“He's…” Bruce vacillating is not a good sign. Oh gosh, Dick is already leaving the cart with his stuff and making his way to the exit. Damn it all, that's exactly why he texted Jason! And

he said Tim was fine a few hours ago, so why is Bruce calling him, and being all Bruce-ly —...

“He's alive, and I believe there is no immediate risk,” that does make him stop dead in his tracks and nearly slump in relief. What the hell? It's like Dick’s soul was returning to his body. “But I could use your opinion on something. Are you available?”

Dick glances back at the cart with his groceries, which he definitely should buy, lest he runs out and then doesn't have the time to come to the supermarket.

Bruce needs his opinion on something that most likely has to do with Tim. There is no immediate risk of death, and all of his siblings at the moment are alive (although he'd definitely text Jason later, just in case), but it sounded important. Dick could hear the clicking of the echoey keyboard on the other line, most likely Bruce doing some research on the Batcave.

Perhaps he could start with finishing here and calling his boss to let him know about his maybe family emergency that was starting to look like a mess. Normal, right?

A sigh. “I'll be there tomorrow.”

The man makes a sound of acknowledgement and hangs up without another word. Hello? Okay. By now Dick is very much used to how his father behaves when something is wrong, with a wide, very wide spectrum to apply that to, but it's still a bit humorous to him just how evident it is when he's even a little stressed.

Not that it doesn't irritate him anymore. In fact, he's very irritated right now.

“I'm really sorry about this by the way,” he tries when he walks back where his cart was, looking around for anything he can do to help the poor janitor to clean up because… Wow, that is a lot of tomato. Pretty nasty-looking tomato. On the floor.

“Don't worry, sir. Please step back.”

“Right, right. Sorry again.”

He decides pushing his cart away to go pay and leave the poor lady alone is the best course of action.

It's like Jason's chat opens on its own while he's waiting in line. Maybe his little brother knew more about what on Earth made his presence needed, specially regarding their littler brother.

You

Why did Bruce just call me and say something incredibly ominous about Tim??? 6:15 p.m

It's not until Dick is opening the door to his apartment with two bags in hand that Jason replies. It doesn't make him feel better.

Little Wing :) (Always Reply)

What?????? 6:34 p.m

See, being purposely vague on what ‘help’ entailed was a good move.

He didn't consider he'd be brought down to Batman's freaky lair for a check-up. Logically, he knew he wouldn't just manage his vigilante business from his trillion-dollar mansion, but it was still a bit surprising to find himself there.

Can he be a fanboy a little? He's fanboying a little, looking around like a kid. And is that a dinosaur? And a giant coin? Who arranged this decoration? He doesn't even care that it must show on his face that he has no idea where anything is, because… Batman Lair!!!!

Or well, it's more of a cave. Haha, Batcave. Surely Bruce Wayne, Mr. Serious Guy, wouldn't call it that?

“You shouldn't walk around on it for a while, Master Tim,” the butler says while he finishes wrapping his ankle, with just the perfect amount of pressure too. As predicted, he twisted it as he walked down the stairs like a maniac, but it shouldn't be that big of a deal. If Tim talked about all the times he has twisted his ankle…

He nods at the man, who he has found out is called Alfred Pennyworth by paying special attention to Bruce and Damian as they spoke to him. Who knew? Thank you, Damian, and your habit of calling people by their last name.

“My ribs hurt… Could you check them, please?”

Alfred doesn't pause like he has learned Bruce would do when something is off, but Tim sees something in his eyes as they lock on his. Hey, he's getting a good grasp at reading people!

In the end, it turns out his ribs are not broken, just bruised, heavily so. Those nasty bruises on his torso were not for nothing after all. Ice and rest should help, Alfred tells him, and Tim doesn't complain much, if at all.

He wonders if he should for so long it's pointless by the time he decides he probably could’ve put up a bit of a fight.

“Thank you,” he smiles, and settles better on the medical bed, mindful of his injuries.

“You are most welcome, Master Tim.”

He will probably never get used to getting called ‘Master Tim’, but he figures it's normal when you're rich, and he can't bring himself to ask if he can be called just Tim. Alfred seems to address all the Wayne family members that way, so it would be weird if Tim suddenly had a problem with it.

When Alfred walks away to bring him water from upstairs, Tim is finally out of anyone’s sight, and he lets out a small sigh of relief, wrapping the blanket Cass had brought from his bedroom around his body. It's not what he wanted earlier, but a soft blanket is a start.

Speaking of, Cass and Bruce are having a hushed conversation, most likely about him. Damian was sent to rest, which was probably for the best because the little guy looked very sleepy—is it fine if he finds Damian cute? How could Sebastian not like him? He's so small! And he looks a little like Bruce too. Happy coincidence?

Tim closes his eyes, pretending to rest, but in reality he's concentrating to catch whatever Bruce and Cass are saying a few meters away from him, in front of the enormous monitor (Haha, the Batcomputer). The cave is very big but they're not that far away, so if he puts in the effort he can make out a little bit of their conversation.

“Concussion?”

“Jason said he brought him home because he was complaining more than usual about the headaches,” Bruce replied. “But in his mask footage it shows him falling and hitting his head.”

“Checked yesterday. How to not notice?”

Tim imagines Bruce grimacing when she says that. Okay, so yesterday he was on patrol, he fell, Jason brought him back home (and lied for a reason he can't understand right now) and Alfred most likely checked him, as it would be normal to do, so he must have been conscious at some point of the check-up if they deemed him good enough to sleep in his room or sleep at all.

People were not supposed to sleep with a concussion, right? Someone said that. Maybe in Dr. House or Grey’s Anatomy. Gosh, Megan loved that stupid series.

“He was in a relatively alright condition and refused a more thorough check-up as is usual,” Alfred chimed in, just as quietly. “However, he answered screening questions coherently, so pardon me if I have to doubt the concussion theory.”

“Something could've happened in-between,” his father theorized. “But if he *was* missing some memories, why is he acting so calm?”

Oh, so memory loss is the main theory? Alright.

“Different people tend to have different reactions to memory loss. Master Timothy is very logical, it might not even be what we're thinking.”

“He does recognize us, but differently,” Cass told them. “I don't know how to describe it. But he is Tim.”

“It doesn't make sense to me.”

Tim imagines Alfred raising an eyebrow at Bruce at that moment. “What should be making sense to you is that your son needs help. He said so himself. So do talk to him, Master Bruce.”

Ooh, good one. You tell him, Alfred!

Someone’s coming his way soon after that, their steps are so quiet he can barely identify them, but he does. He's ready, very ready to go all What? Oh, no, he's just been resting his eyes. Yup. He's very tired after having a very minor breakdown.

A hand is placed on his shoulder, and he wills himself not to flinch. It would be weird if he did that around his family, right? Even if they knew he didn't recognize them fully, he wanted to act like Tim Drake the character as much as possible. It's like roleplaying, in a way, except you have only a vague idea of how the character is.

“Hm?” he slowly blinks his eyes open, playing into the tired-and-confused attitude. He didn't expect Cass exactly, but she's a more comforting presence at the moment—his body says so, at least. “Cass?”

She smiles at him as she passes him the glass of water Alfred presumably brought for him. “Feeling better?”

Tim nods as he takes a small sip. He is indeed feeling better, mostly because he's no longer in the middle of an anxiety attack.

His sister stares at him for a moment, and when he's about to ask what's wrong, she speaks again. “Do you remember something?”

“I… what?” *something* could apply to many things. Is she asking if he remembers them? Or if he remembers anything that could've put him in this state?

“Something happened, yesterday?”

He had a feeling he could not lie to her, or not fully. She looks and acts like someone very perceptive, so maybe she—...

He's about to answer, opening his mouth to tell her something so she could help him even if minimally, even if he doesn't tell her half of it, when he momentarily looks over Cass’ shoulder. There he spots Bruce standing there, looking at them. At him.

And here's what Tim puts in perspective: no matter just how willing to help others Batman could be, it's obvious the man’s real family will come as a priority, and he might not even get the full explanation in before Bruce decides he wants to bring the other Tim back if only to not take any risks of his son dying.

If Tim was in his position, he'd do the same—after all, *he* is a stranger, and he doesn't know Bruce in a conventional way back in his universe.

Is there a good way to explain to someone that they're a comic character? He doesn't want to find out.

The containment cells must be for something after all. And even if they didn't lock him up, they sure as hell wouldn't let him participate in the search for the solution, which would only get messy. It's not like Bruce should trust him, and realizing he is not the original and his mistake of bringing him down to his hideout would make it worse.

He doesn't want to find out if Cass would be on his side or not. But now is not the time, not when Bruce is here.

Tim looks away with a small frown. Bruce must notice that, because he sees the movement of him turning away and back to the giant computer from his peripheral vision.

“I can't remember what happened, sorry,” he mumbles. “I just know something’s wrong.”

Cass nods, looking thoughtful. Does she believe him? If she doesn't, it’s not visible on her expression, although it doesn't calm him in the slightest.

He takes another sip from the water to try and disguise his anxiety, which has been slowly taking over in the form of tingles in his limbs. That's normal when he's under the pressure of his own thoughts, and even though she means well, Cass is so perceptive he can't help but feel the weight of her understanding on him along with it.

“He wants to draw a bit of blood to check. Is that good?”

“Okay.”

He's not worried about the blood samples, after all this *is* the original’s body.

What is in his mind right now is finding the thing that doesn't belong. An anomaly.

With the crazy life of a vigilante in DC Comics when you're surrounded by aliens, fish people (he hopes that's NOT something wrong to say) and many, many others, it shouldn't be weird if there was some magic involved in the world. After all, most isekai stories took magic as their base.

If he has transmigrated, there must be something that explains it. Remaining magic, some sort of energy shift in the universe? Stuff like that, something that doesn't fit… If there *is* something, it must be reversible!

He just needs to find out what it is, and seek the token appears-in-every-story magic person to solve this for him and then ditch.

But first, he needs to find out who that is.

The blood results end up showing nothing. After all, he is Timothy Jackson Drake. His blood will show nothing of his consciousness being switched. He can see that it stresses Bruce out a little, and then a so-called Doctor Leslie is being called to get there as soon as possible. It will take her a while, it seems.

“Not even remnants of pollen, magic, anything?” Bruce asks into the air, to which Cass sighs. They're both seeing the same thing in the monitor, and while Tim pretends he doesn't, he's thinking the results through.

Then, no magic was applied to him directly. That makes it harder. Of course, the spell slash anything that made this possible wasn't casted from here—otherwise the camera they apparently had in their masks would've caught it and it would've shown in the tests Bruce ran.

In which case, that meant it originated from his own universe, which felt even more ridiculous. Wasn't his supposed to be the normal one?

What is transmigration even about? If he had a system, he *would* know.

Three hours later, Tim ends up alone with him in the medbay while Cass is sent to rest a little before their patrol starts. The man dragged a chair to sit by the bed, carefully observing him as he pretends to sleep, like a creep! Do parents actually watch their children sleep? He never knew, or at least he never caught his parents doing that.

It would make sense if he was a baby, but Tim is seventeen, no?

“I know you're awake,” Bruce breaks the heavy silence after a bit, and Tim holds back from rolling his eyes.

“You're making me a little uncomfortable, dad,” he retorts, trying to keep his voice calm. It feels childish, but Tim is so unused to having people around he can't bring himself to confront just how much it bothers him that he has to put up with this strange mix of concern and suspicion.

Bruce doesn't apologize, he notices. He gives a vague grunt he can't decipher, but he refuses to open his eyes to see what his expression tells.

“There is something wrong with you.”

That does make him open his eyes to convey his surprise and irritation perfectly, just in time to watch Bruce pinch the bridge of his nose. *Hello? Is that something you just tell people?*

“That came out wrong.”

“Yes, very much. Words have never been your thing.”

“Son...”

Tim looks away, at the ceiling. Of the Cave. The Batcave. That's so damn funny, he can't help it.

“You said you needed help, but I don't understand what you mean,” Bruce continues after a while, seeing as he is not answering. “Help me understand.”

Hm. Okay, so this guy is dumber than he thought. Seriously, taking one would look at Timothy Jackson Drake should be enough to see he is not okay! You're telling him the guy's dad can't see it?

(*“Tim, you can't expect someone to just know what you're thinking!” Ariana told him once, while they were breaking up.*)

Ouch, looking back at it, he was a total jerk to her. And she was right, was she not?

Think. Upside down, everything in their lives is the opposite of what Tim knows. His year had been... actually rather peaceful, minus his somewhat depressing thoughts about having another life that were basically requirement to him being... him. And minus him getting thrown into this place.

“This past year was horrible,” Tim ends up saying, which seems to surprise Bruce. As much as one can surprise that guy, really. “I think... It's just catching up to me.”

Should he cry? In the end he decides not to.

They're quiet for a good while.

“It's just... strange to me. You were fine yesterday.”

(*“He was fine yesterday, I swear...” Megan told the school counselor, when she was called after he had an anxiety attack in the middle of class.*

He was fourteen, and far from his first or last panic attack.

“Miss Drake, with all due respect, Tim has been having problems for a while,” the kind lady, Miss Eliza, tried to explain. “I've told him it's best for him to see a therapist.”

“Yes, yes, of course. I will start looking.”

She did start looking. He went to therapy, once. But it made him feel guilty that he was just making her spend money on something that wasn't even that bad. The therapist he saw disagreed, but in the end he decided to drop it and Megan just... listened.

“Okay,” she said simply, and pushed a package of cookies his way. A way of cheering him up, he supposed, but she knew him so little she didn't even realize Tim disliked peanut butter cookies.

He never went back to the school counselor.)

Tim narrows his eyes. He supposes some things don't change. “No, I was not. I didn't want you to know I was struggling, it's different.”

His name is Timothy Drake, he is from a normal universe where people don't dress as bats to fight crime and he is projecting on an alternative version of him. Guilty as charged. Lock him up, will you?

Bruce looks devastated. It almost makes him feel... sad for him.

“It's been a few months since I returned, and my family seems to be doing fine since Cass returned too,” okay, so Bruce was somehow away! And Cass, too. Great information. Thank you, this just confirms that this Tim's year was definitely shit. “I didn't mean to make you feel like you couldn't tell me how you felt. I admit I... thought we were doing okay.”

Tim's hand is taken between Bruce's own. It takes all his willpower to not react to the touch, lest he leans into it or worse, flinched away.

“I know,” is his reply. Lame, a little. “I... Didn't want to disrupt the peace now that everyone is okay. You're right, we have been getting better so I thought...”

He trails off, and lets the silence reign for longer than before.

Bruce seems to take it as his cue to leave, because he lets go of his hand and stands up. Tim almost misses the contact, but refuses to show it, instead looking away. He wishes his ribs didn't hurt so he could lay more comfortably, but alas, this is his destiny for now.

“Rest for a bit,” Bruce tells him, even though he looks like he wants to say many things not even close to that. “Doctor Leslie will be here soon.”

Tim doesn't reply, and his father exits the room and leaves him alone.

Cass watches her dad come upstairs from the cave and enter the living room, phone in hand and with that expression of concern that screamed something was wrong. It's been some time since Tim brought him back from the timestream, and since she returned to Gotham and reintegrated into the family.

She knew Tim was not fine.

(*“I will ask for help when I need it, Cassie,” he told her, once.*

“No, you won't.”

She hadn't even meant it meanly. She just knew he wouldn't.

And still, Tim merely smiled at her with difficulty and turned his empty eyes back into the city opening before them, a perfect view from the top of this building.

Sometimes she fears one day will be the last time she will see her little brother.)

Bruce looks at her, and Cass looks at him from where she sits with a cushion in her lap.

“I thought you would be resting.”

“It is him,” she tells him, ignoring his comment. “That is Tim.”

Her dad nods, but he doesn't look convinced in the slightest.

He's leaving before she can say anything else, and she watches him go upstairs, probably to look for something that would explain it all in Tim's room, which her brother would probably hate.

Either way, Cassandra is probably not fit to tell him that. She has come to understand worry drives people to do some things they shouldn't.

When she is by herself in the living room, she looks down at the notebook she found under Tim's pillows, and sighs.

Chapter End Notes

hiiiii sorry i fell asleep :p hi Dick and Cassie

I HOPE THIS GIVES A BIT OF CONTEXT OF TIM'S PLAN! for now he is trying to figure things out by Bullshitting his way through anything. things will get interesting though, because the universe IS on Tim's side 👀 mostly. You'll see!

Cass knows more but she has decided to withhold some information. not that she knows exactly what is happening, but she is Cass & she is incredibly smart. but also, she is Cass & she is a great older sister! & no I won't be getting rid of her for plot purposes... Hopefully I can explain things in a way that feel appropriate & not forced because i hate when she is made to stay in HK 😢 please acknowledge Orphan

also the new batman chapter pissed me off so if it feels like i hate Bruce is because i do. KILL BRUCE WAYNE KILL HIM KILL writing Bruce is medieval torture /aff. and clearly Fraction doesn't understand shit about anything im so mad

Bruce: oh no i have to talk about feelings with my son after ignoring the signs of clear mental illness he exhibited when he lost his family and friends & went through terrible trauma

Tim: oh hey feelings here we are *projects his family issues onto Bruce*

this fic should be called Miscommunication and Everyone Jumps To Their Own Conclusions the Sequel, because the Prequel is the whole Timestream Fiasco Arc

thanks 4 reading!

- Sumi ❤

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!